



Cumulative Effects Analysis

Federal Highway Administration

Directions: Key elements (review questions and steps) that comprise the Community of Practice for cumulative effects analyses are located in the right hand column. Identify the location within the analytic documentation (for example, the page and paragraph in the associated Environmental Assessment) in the left hand column. For each CEA, all key elements must be explicit in the analytic document. At a minimum, all key elements must be mapped to specific information in the analytic document.

Note that CEA are resource focused, baselines are only infrequently static, and that the parameters of CEA vary by statute. “Each affected resource, ecosystem, and human community must be analyzed in terms of its capacity to accommodate additional effects, based on its own time and space parameters” From CEQ, 1997, “*Considering Cumulative Effects Under the National Environmental Policy Act*” Principles, Table 1-2 (item #8)

Judicial Review Standard: The “Fritiofson v. Alexander*” Test

* Fritiofson v. Alexander, 772 F.2d 1225 (5th Cir. 1985)

Location

	What is the geographic area affected by the project?
	What are the resources affected by the project?
	What are the other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions that have impacted these resources?
	What were those impacts?
	What is the overall impact on these various resources from the accumulation of the actions?

Best Practices: The CEQ’s 11 steps (from CEQ, 1997; Table 3)

Location

	Identify the significant cumulative effects associated with the proposed action and define the assessment goals
	Establish the geographic scope for the analysis
	Establish the time frame for the analysis
	Identify other actions affecting the resources, ecosystems, and human communities of concern
	Characterize the resources, ecosystems, and human communities identified in scoping in terms of their response to change and capacity to withstand stresses
	Characterize the stresses affecting these resources, ecosystems, and human communities and their relation to regulatory thresholds
	Define a baseline condition for the resources, ecosystems, and human communities
	Identify the important cause-and-effect relationships between human activities and resources, ecosystems, and human communities
	Determine the magnitude and significance of cumulative effects
	Modify or add alternatives to avoid, minimize, or mitigate significant cumulative effects
	Monitor the cumulative effects of the selected alternative and adapt management